

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 IO-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

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FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

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INFO USMISSION USUN NY

AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY BANGUI

AMEMBASSY BANJUL

AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE

AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY COTOOU

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY FREETOWN

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY KIGALI

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LOURENCO MARQUES

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

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AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA
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AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU
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AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE
USCINCEURM

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TUNIS 0402

FOR EMBASSY CAPE TOWN

USCINCEUR FOR OLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TS, AO

SUBJECT: ANGOLA:TUNISIAN PERCEPTIONS

1. SUMMARY: FONMIN CHATTI, BACK FROM OAU SUMMIT, BELIEVES ANGOLA SITUATION IS VERY SERIOUS. STATES RECOGNIZING MPLA ARE FIRMLY COMMITTED WHILE OTHER AFRICAN STATES ARE UNDER GREAT PRESSURE TO VEER TOWARD MPLA LARGELY BECAUSE OF SOUTH AFRICAN ASSOCIATION WITH OPPONENTS OF MPLA. CHATTI BELIEVES THA INCREASING CONTROL OF TERRAIN MAY SOON RESULT IN WIDER RECOGNITION OF MPLA. PRO-MPLA GROUP AT OAU SUMMIT HAD BEEN TOTALLY UNWILLING TO DISCUSS MEASURES LOOKING TO PEACEFUL RESOLUTION BECAUSE THEY FELT MPLA WOULD WIN EVERYTHING MILITARILY ANYWAY. DESPITE BROAD CRITICISM IN AFRICA OF SOUTH AFRICAN INVOLVEMENT, FONMIN DODE NOT BELIEVE SOUTH AFRICAN WITHDRAWAL WILL GENERATE NEGATIVE AFRICAN REACTION TO CONINUING CUBAN/RUSSIAN PRESENCE IN ANGOLA SINCE THAT PRESENCE IS AT REQUEST OF "GOVERNMENT" RECOGNIZED BY HALF OF AFRICA. CHATTI SEES RUSSIAN INVOLVEMENT AS BASED ON RIVALRY WITH CHINESE, AS WELL AS ON IDOLOGICAL AND STRAGEGIC
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CONSIDERATIONS. CHATTI CHARACTERIZED COST TO SOVIETS OF ANGOLA OPERATION AS RELATIVELY CHEAP.
RE NIGERIAN CRITICISM OF PRESIDENT FORD' LETTER ON ANGOLA, CHAVLPNCOMMENTED THAT LETTER TO BOURGUIBA WAS WELL RECEIVED BY TUNISIANS. CHATTI'S REACTION TO ANGOLAN EVENTS HAS UNDERSCORED FACT THAT GOT REMAINS BASICALLY MORE COMFORTABLE WITH MODERATES THAN WITH SO-CALLED "PROGRESSIVE" STATES.
END SUMMARY.

2. AMBASSADOR CALLED ON FONMIN CHATTI JANUARY 20, FOLLOWING CHATTI'S RETURN FROM OAU SUMMIT VIA STOP IN CAIRO. FONMIN HAD FOLLOWING TO SAY:

3. ANGOLA SITUATION IS VERY BAD. FNLA IS NERLY OUT OF ACTION, AND THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT THAT L'UNITA DEPENDS ENTIRELY ON WILLINGNESS OF SOUTH AFRICA TO REMAIN ENGAGED. IN AFRICA THE REVELATION OF CI FUNDS FURNISHED TO HOLDEN ROBERTO IS BEING EXPLOITED AGAINST FNLA. SUPPORTRS OF MPLA MAKE MUCH OF IT, AND DO NOT RPT NOT PASS JUDGMENT ON THE RUSSIANS. SOUTH AFRICA IS BLAMED, AND THE UNITED STATES, TOO, BECAUSE "ITS PRESS TALKS TOO MUCH5;" THIS GENERATES GREAT PRESSURE ON THE STATES WHO HAVE NOT RPT NOT RECOGNIZED MPLA GOVERNMENT. HOW, AFTER ALL, CAN ONE DEFEND A GROUP WHICH HAS "ONLY SOUTH AFRICA" AS ITS ALLY?

4. CHATTI WENT ON TONOTE, HOWEVER, THAT SOUTH AFRICA, ATTACKED ON ALL SIDES, INCLUDING BY AMERICAN PRESS, SEEMS TO HAVE DECIDED TO PULL OUT OF ANGOLA. SOUTH AFRICA IS INSTEAD CONCENTRATING ON NAMIBIA. HE ADDED THAT SOUTH AFRICA CANNOT STAY IN ANGOLA ALONE, WITHOUT SUPPORT FROM WESTERN POWERS. SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT HAS ITS INTERNAL PROBLEMS WHICH ARE RELEVANT ALSO. INADDITION, CHATTI SAID, THE CUBANS, WELL TRAINED AND ARMED, FACE POORLY TRAINED UNITA TROOPS, OR FORCES OF ZAIRE AND ZAMBIA WHICH ARE ALSO NOT AS WELL TRAINED.

5. AMBASSADOR ASKED WHETHER CHATTI WAS ENCOURAGED OR DSCOURAGED BY RESULTS OF OAU SUMMIT. CHATTI REPLIED HE WAS DISAPPOINTED BU NOT DISCOURAGED OR INTIMIDATED. CONFIDENTIAL

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BUT THERE HAD BEEN NO POSSIBILITY OF A DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE OPPOSING SIDES. GOT HAD WANTED A CEASEFIRE, A RECONCILIATION COMMISSION, AND ELECTIONS, BUT OTHER SIDE WOD DISCUSS NONE OF THESE. CHATTI SAID HE KNEW THE REASON FOR THIS INTRANPIGNECNE WAS THAT MPLA FELT ITSELF TO BE WINNING MILITARILY. WITH EVERYTHING TO GAIN ON THE GROUND, MPLA SAW NO REASON TO COMPROMISE. POLITICALLY THE MPLA IS IN BETTER POSITION THAN OPPONENTS SINCE THEY ARE BACKED BY RUSSIANS AND CUBANS WHILE FNLA HAS "ONLY SOUTH AFRICA" ON ITS SIDE. MPLA CAME TO ADDIS ABABA ONLY TO GAIN MEMBERSHIP IN OA, BY OBTAINING ACCEPTANCE BY TWO THIRDS OF MEMBERS. MPLA FAILED IN THIS--WHICH IS ALL IT WANTS AT THE PRESENT TIME. GIVEN THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION, IN WHICH THE RUSSIANS SEE EVERY CHANCE TO

INTERFERE WITHOUT AN IMMEDIATE AMERICAN RESPONSE,
MPLA
THINKS IT CAN COUNT ON VICTORY.

6. ASKED WHETHER HE THOUGHT THE WITHDRAWAL OF SOUTH
AFRICAN FORCES WOULD LEAD TO NEGATIVE AFRICAN REACTIONS
AGAINST REMAINING CUBANS AND RUSSIANS, CHATTI SAID NO.

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ACTION NEA-10

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FOR EMBASSY CAPE TOWN

USCINCEUR FOR POLAD

SUCH WITHDRAWAL WOULD BE CONSIDERED NOT A CONCESSION BUT A MERE VICTORY BY RUSSIANS AND CUBANS, WHO ARE SEEN AS INVOLVED AT THE REQUEST OF A GOVERNMENT WHICH IS RECOGNIZED BY HALF THE STATES OF AFRICA. THE 23 WHO RECOGNIZE MPLA ARE FIRMLY TIED TO THAT POSITION, WHILE AMONG THE 23 WHO HAVE NOT RECOGNIZED MPLA THERE IS DANGER OF DEFECTION TO THE MPLA SIDE. CONTROL OF TERRAIN WITHIN ANGOLA WILL COUNT FOR A GREAT DEAL IN THIS MATTER.

7. AMBASSADOR OBSERVED THAT RUSSIAN INVOLVEMENT IN ANGOLA IS UNUSUALLY HEAVY AND WAS TAKING PLACE FAR FROM USSR. TO WHAT DID CHATTI ASCRIBE THIS MAJOR SOVIET INTERVENTION? CHATTI FIRST NOTED SOVIET CONCERN WITH CHINESE PRESENCE IN AFRICA. CHINESE HAD GOTTEN INTO AFRICA FIRST AND WERE IN EFFECT CHALLENGING THE SOVIETS TO COMPETE. IN PARTICULAR, SOVIETS ARE CONTESTING MOZAMBIQUE WITH THE CHINESE. ALSO, SOVIETS ARE SEEKING TO SPREAD THEIR IDEOLOGY BY PROPAGATING AS MANY POPULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLICS AS POSSIBLE. FOR EXAMPLE, FOR THIS PURPOSE USSR IS DEVELOPING CLOSE RELATIONS WITH BRAZZAVILLE. FURTHERMORE, CONTINUED CHATTI, ANGOLA IS STRATEGICALLY

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IMPORTANT TO SOVIETS FROM STANDPOINT OF SEA ROUTES AROUND CAPE. THE COST OF THIS SOVIET INVOLVEMENT IN AFRICA--WHICH CHATTI ESTIMATED AT ABOUT \$250 MILLION SO FAR--MEANS VERY LITTLE WHEN EVALUATED IN CONTEXT OF THE RUSSIAN ECONOMY.

8. FONMIN THOUGHT THAT WE ARE FAR FROM THE END OF TROUBLGU IN ANGOLA, WHICH WOULD HAVE SWEEPING CONSEQUENCES. IN AFRICA THE UNITED STATES FACES ON ONE HAND THE BLOC OF "PROGRESSIVE" STATES WHO HAVE VERY CLOSE RELATIONS WITH USSR, AND, ON OTHER HAND, INDEPENDENT, NONALIGNED STATES WHO, WITHOUT BREAKING WITH USSR, CONTINUE TO HAVE GOOD RELATIONS WITH USG. THE CLEAVAGE BETWEEN THE TWO GROUPS IS CLEAR AND THEIR POSITIONS RIGID.

9. CHATTI NOTED THAT NIGERIANS HAD PUBLISHED PRESIDENT FORD'S LETTER ON ANGOLA, CALLING IT ANINSULTING ATTEMPT TO INSTRUCT AFRICAN HEADS OF STATE. OF COURSE, LETTER PRESIDENT BOURGUIBBA HAD RECEIVED WAS NO SUCH THING, SAID CHATTI, BUT ONLY THE EXPRESSION OF AN OPINION AND A SOLICITATION OF THE TUNISIAN OPINION.

10. AMBASSADOR MENTIONED ASST. SECRETARY SCHAUFEELE'S AFRICAN VISITS PRIOR TO OAU SUMMIT. CHATTI VOLUNTEERED THAT BOTH SENGHOR AND MOBUTO HAD TOLD CHATTI AT ADDIS ABABA THEY HAD FORMED HIGH OPINION OF SCHAUFEELE, ADMIRING HIS KNOWLEDGE OF AFRICA, FAR- SIGHTEDNESS, AND ESPECIALLY HIS "SANG-FROID." CHATTI HAD READ SCHAUFEELE'S INTERVIEW PUBLISHED IN JEUNE AFRIQUE.

1. COMMENT:TUNISIAN REACTION TO ANGOLA DEVELOPMENTS HAS UNDERSCORED FACT THAT GOT ESTABLISHMENT STILL BASICALLY FEELS MORE AT HOME WITH MODERATES AND "DIALOGUERS" THAN WITH HARD-NOSED "PROGRESSIVE" STATES.
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